

Copper in Lincoln pennies hardly worth a cent

By Roger Boye

This week's column answers more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—I noticed that copper sold for slightly more than \$1 a pound in mid-November, its highest price in seven years. Should I be saving Lincoln pennies for their metal content? How high would prices have to

go before I would make money on the copper in a 1-cent coin?

L. P., Western Springs

A—It doesn't make sense (or cents) to hoard Lincoln pennies. Since 1982 Uncle Sam has produced Lincolns out of zinc plated with a thin layer of copper. The metal in one such penny still is worth a fraction of a cent.

Most Lincolns minted between 1909 and 1981, as well as some

1982s, contain almost pure copper. But copper prices would have to rise to about \$1.50 a pound before the metal in each of those coins is worth 1 cent.

Q—My husband obtained several pieces of Japanese "occupation currency" when he fought in the Philippines during World War II. Do the bills still have any legal value?

E. P., Chicago

A—No; the currency was

worthless by war's end. As collectibles, most samples bring less than 25 cents each.

● Questions about old coins or paper money? Send your queries to Roger Boye, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a personal reply and allow at least three weeks for the answer.